

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ACCRA 06220 011614Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4878

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY LLOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OUGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PGOV GH

SUBJ: AKUFFO PLEDGES TO HAND OVER POWER TO A CIVILIAN TRANSITIONAL
GOVERNMENT IN 1979

1. SUMMARY: HEAD OF STATE AKUFFO ADDRESSED THE NATION
JULY 31 AND ANNOUNCED THE DECISION OF THE SUPREME MILITARY
COUNCIL (SMC) TO HAND OVER POWER IN 1979 TO A TRANSITIONAL
(INTERIM) NATIONAL GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. IN FIVE MINUTE TV/RADIO ADDRESS LAST EVENING, LT. GENERAL
AKUFFO. NEW CHAIRMAN OF THE SMC AND HEAD OF STATE, ANNOUNCED
TO THE NATION SMC PLANS TO HAND OVER POWER TO A CIVILIAN
GOVERNMENT IN 1979. NOTING HIS PROMISE IN INITIAL ADDRESS
TO PEOPLE OF GHANA (ACCRA 5558) TO QUICKLY INFORM THEM OF
SMC PLANS FOR POLITICAL FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY, AKUFFO
STATED SMC HAD DECIDED THAT: A. THE SMC WOULD RELINQUISH
POWER IN 1979 AS SCHEDULED TO A "TRANSITIONAL (INTERIM)

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PAGE 02 ACCRA 06220 011614Z

NATIONAL GOVERNMENT"; B. THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT
WILL BE ELECTED BY AND FULLY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE
OF GHANA CHOSEN IN FREE ELECTIONS BUT WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT
BE ORGANIZED OR OPERATED ON THE BASIS OF POLITICAL PARTIES.
(AKUFFO OBSERVED THAT THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION
WAS NOT YET SUFFICIENTLY STABLE TO ENGAGE IN THIS PROCESS);
C. THERE WILL BE NO "INSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATION" OF

THE ARMED FORCES OR THE POLICE IN THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT;
D. THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT WILL BE CONSTITUTED TO SERVE
FOR A PERIOD OF NOT LESS THAN FOUR YEARS, AFTER WHICH THE
GHANAIAI PEOPLE MAY CHOOSE A PERMANENT CONSTI-
TUTION; E. THE CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSION IS BEING
RECONSTITUTED TO DRAFT A TRANSITIONAL NATIONAL GOVERNMENT
CONSTITUTION FOR SUBMISSION TO A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY TO
BE CONVENED IN NOVEMBER 1978, AS ORIGINALLY ENVISAGED.

3. AKUFFO EMPHASIZED THAT THE SMC HAD CONSULTED WIDELY
WITH VARIOUS LEGITIMATE INTEREST GROUPS, REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE COUNTRY BEFORE REACHING THESE FAR REACHING DECISIONS.
HE FERVENTLY HOPED THEY WOULD HELP IN THE PROCESS OF
NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND UNITY TO WHICH THE SMC WAS
DEDICATED.

4. COMMENT: THESE DECISIONS MEET VIRTUALLY ALL THE DEMANDS
OF THE UNIVERSITY LECTURERS ASSOCIATION, THE GHANA BAR
ASSOCIATION, PROFESSIONAL BODIES ASSOCIATION AND OTHER
RESPONSIBLE ELEMENTS WHO HAVE INSISTED ON THE ABANDON-
MENT OF THE UNION GOVERNMENT CONCEPT AND INSTITUTION OF A
CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT FREE OF MILITARY AND POLICE PARTICIPATION
(AKUFFO HAS STUDIOUSLY AVOIDED ANY REFERENCES TO UNION
GOVERNMENT IN HIS PUBLIC UTTERANCES SINCE ASSUMING POWER
AND WE MAY NOW ASSUME THAT DISTASTEFUL CONCEPT HAS FINALLY
PASSED FROM THE GHANAIAI POLITICAL LEXICON). THE IDEA
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PAGE 03 ACCRA 06220 011614Z

OF A "TRANSITIONAL (INTERIM) NATION GOVERNMENT", FREELY
CHOSEN BY ELECTION AND FULLY REPRESENTATIVE OF GHANAIAI
PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE BROAD APPEAL, PARTICULARLY GIVEN
GHANA'S PRESENT DESPERATE FINANCIAL SITUATION, ALTHOUGH
SOME WOULD-BE POLITICIANS WHO ARE ALREADY GEARING UP FOR
POLITICAL ACTION MAY BE DISAPPOINTED BY THE APPARENT
CONTINUING BAN ON POLITICAL PARTIES. NEVERTHELESS, IN
THE EMBASSY'S VIEW AKUFFO AND HIS COLLEAGUES ON THE SMC
HAVE STRUCK THE RIGHT NOTE AND MADE ANOTHER NOTABLE
CONTRIBUTION TO THE HEALING PROCESS THE COUNTRY SO URGENTLY
NEEDS AFTER SIX YEARS OF ACHEAMPNG'S MIS-RULE. HOLMES

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